



Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilot *Somerville, MA*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA Region 1 selected the City of Somerville for a Regional Brownfields Pilot. Somerville is a community of about 76,000 inhabitants, the most densely populated city in Massachusetts, covering 4.2 square miles, just 3 miles north of Boston. In 1990, about 11 percent of the population lived in poverty. The historic mix of land use in the City has led to a relatively large number of brownfields interspersed among residential neighborhoods. About 17 percent of the City is used for industrial and commercial purposes. Soil contamination, identified by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, on 67 properties within the City's borders, is in need of further investigation. The number of contaminated properties may increase as more sites are investigated.

OBJECTIVES

Somerville's Office of Housing and Community Development is taking the lead in developing a program to promote private sector reuse of contaminated properties. The Pilot will assess and plan for the remediation of three demonstration sites which will lead to the creation or retention of jobs and contribute to the health and quality of life in surrounding neighborhoods. A major objective

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Somerville, Massachusetts

Date of Award:
September 1996

Amount: \$100,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets three demonstration sites to develop a model that will promote private sector reuse of contaminated properties.

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of the Pilot is to construct an administrative mechanism that complies with and reconciles Federal housing and urban development and environmental protection policies and guidelines, while serving as a model for other properties. The Pilot will explore approaches to brownfields cleanup stop-loss insurance.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot is:

- Developing a computer database on CD-ROM including potential brownfields sites and information about the City's brownfields program. The CD-ROM will be distributed to real estate agents and interested developers;
- Conducting a city-wide investigation of potential brownfields sites;
- Developing model legal documents to be used in the site testing and stop-loss insurance programs; and
- Conducting site assessments to estimate remediation costs at three demonstration sites with the greatest potential for reuse.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Somerville Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- The City of Somerville is planning to provide funds for stop-loss insurance to cover remediation costs in excess of estimated costs. The program will be funded by a Community Development Block Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

